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THINGS THAT MATTER

By SIR HUBERT PARRY

THERE are an immense number of instances of works of art and literature which have had great vogue, and have been enthusiastically extolled for a while, but have soon vanished altogether into the limbo of things forgotten; except by the few whose duty it is to collect and certify illustrations of human fallibility. People commonly talk of such works as old-fashioned, and many think that explains everything. But as it is rather an unfriendly word it would be fairer to consider what it originally meant. Some people evidently regard the word as synonymous with 'old,' and 'old' as synonymous with 'superseded.' They seem to labour under the curious misconception that a thing is old-fashioned because the fashion for it is past; while in reality the meaning of the word was that the thing referred to had been fashioned long ago, and that the fashioning of it was after a manner that had been superseded or dropped in the general progress of arts and social habits. In its original sense the thing that was old-fashioned could be, on that account, loveable, romantic, suffused with a pretty savour of quaint ancientness. But in course of time the meaning of the word has grown specialized in an unfavourable direction; and this partly on account of its association with the word 'fashion.'

It was natural to think that the word 'old-fashioned' was derived from 'fashion'; but it is easy to see that the contrary was the fact, and that the latter word was derived from the former; and the slur which some people cast on a thing which is said to be 'old-fashioned' is owing to the attitude of mind which is engendered by much superfluous subservience to the standards of local and contemporary fashions. To such a type of mind

what is not in the fashion is not worthy of attention; and the advocacy of the extension of appreciation to such things as were fashioned in times of old is regarded as the mere stale, unprofitable babble of doddering dotards. It is a cheap way of ruling out things which seem likely to require a little effort of the intelligence to appreciate.

But even the most infatuated of the worshippers of fashion would not really rule things out because they were old, when brought to the actual test. In its depreciatory sense the word is not in the least synonymous with 'old.' The Acropolis is not old-fashioned, the Pyramids are not old-fashioned, Stonehenge is not old-fashioned, Palestrina's "Missa Papae Marcelli" is not old-fashioned, Bach's organ music is not old-fashioned, Rembrandt, Velasquez, Van Dyck are not old-fashioned, Shakespeare and Aristophanes are not old-fashioned; while on the other hand plenty of pictures which are shown with approval in exhibitions of the highest prestige are old-fashioned in the very next year. So it is clearly not on account of its age that a thing is old-fashioned.

But neither on the other hand could a thing be ruled as dead and done with on account of its not being in accordance with temporary fashion, but in reality rather the reverse. For one of the permanent jokes of those who laugh longest is, that the ideas of those who are in the forefront of fashion at any time are always the subjects of withering derision to those who represent the next fashion. It might fairly be argued that fashion shares this peculiarity with philosophies; but the discussion of the parallel would be disproportionate; it must be sufficient to point out that it would be very unsafe to take fashion as a touchstone of quality, when it is obvious that its most conspicuous characteristic is instability—in other words, that it hardly takes as much as a generation on an average to discover that its criteria are worthless.

The respect paid to fashion is mainly a survival. In days a little while ago, when those who patronized art and literature were few, people respected the tastes and opinions of those few who had a right to speak of culture as something honourable; and fashion in art matters and in literature really represented some little sense and enlightened discrimination. But when the wealthy classes ceased to take pride in knowing something about art, fashion ceased to have any consistency whatever and became the product of some three or four influences; such as imitation of and sympathy with the tastes (or absence of them) of immediate

neighbours, the arrogance of the half-witted type of plutocrats, and the astuteness of commercials. It was the interest of all concerned to avoid being long in the same opinion. Even the most abject mind could not put up with fashion if it was not perpetually changing. Fashion, moreover, does not want things that last. If they last too well they last till they are out of fashion and then discredit its devotees. Fashion is a crude manner of marshalling the hosts of those who do not want the trouble of thinking for themselves. It is a sort of safeguard to those who are incapable of going along alone. It is implied of necessity that its devotees are deficient in mental outfit; and only survive by perpetual change of their ground.

But the essence of art on the other hand is permanence; by which is meant that it survives the close scrutiny of all the best minds for generations. The products which represent fashion do not survive scrutiny. Take for instance any inadequate work about which the general public is lured into wild ecstasy by clever advertisement. At first it is swept whole-heartedly into the vortex; but after a while some few begin to discern inadequacies, even the shuffling workman's faulty work, and the flaws become irritating; and when men know that every time they submit to the spell of the work again they will have to experience the same feeling of nausea from dishonest pretence in it they necessarily draw away from it, and very soon indeed they will have to confess that the thing is indeed old-fashioned in the bad sense. But the work that is really sound is welcomed by the sternest critics for generations; and if flaws are found and condoned it is because they are honourable flaws; the flaws of the creature really trying to do his best with such means as are at his disposal, and not trying to pass off impostures as compromises made to please or hoax the ignorant.

It would be gratifying to be able to say that fashion is a thing which does not matter, but unfortunately it would not be true. Its influence is unavoidable. There are hardly any men strong enough to be able to disregard it, and those who try to do so and write in accordance with patiently earned convictions are likely themselves to be disregarded. As things are, fashion colours everything that attracts public attention, and it accordingly takes a very large share in determining the qualities which characterize the art of any time or generation. This implies that fashion is not purely fortuitous. In the present day those who organize fashions, whether for commercial or for other purposes, study their public with great astuteness. They are not so foolish as to try

to drive them in a direction they do not want to go. They prepare the ground step by step and each new departure leads naturally to another, just as the discomforts of the notorious hobble skirt which confined female legs led to the split skirt which exposed them sometimes surprisingly. The laughable thing is that the public does not know where it is being led, and thinks it is its own genius which is finding out the new things. And so subservience takes the appearance of spontaneity—and the fact remains that each change of fashion does in a way represent the mental outfit or temperamental average of the time. And in that sense it matters. It matters especially as a thing against which every independent personality has ceaselessly to strive.

But it must obviously be a very superficial part of art which is so chameleon-like in its vagaries. The things that are vital take ages to change. It is indeed only the surface which changes, and in these fashions, whether of art or literature, the reasons are not difficult to find. It is characteristic of undeveloped minds to worship accessories. Lack of vitality of brain shows itself especially in the incapacity to discern the true meaning of things, and to be seduced by the trappings, the adornments, the bedizened outsides of things. To unalert minds it is inevitable to mistake attitudinizing for heroism, bluster for bravery, rouge and powder for beauty, and the glib outpourings of big words for oratory. They are so dazzled by the external show that they have not any attention left to discover if there is anything behind it. Hence fashion in arts mainly concerns itself with phraseology; and it is mainly by phraseology that one period differs from another, and it is in phraseology especially that a thing becomes 'old-fashioned.'

Yet phraseology in music as in literature is a matter of great importance. It can be manipulated for various purposes. It may be concentrated with superb skill to convey interesting thoughts and speculations. It can be used for decorative purposes to give æsthetic interest, or the impression of skill in the performer. It can also be used so as to conceal the absence of any thought worth considering, and it can be made up of popular catch phrases to tickle the ears of the groundlings. The two latter kinds do not need consideration here, but the two first often seem to run contrary to one another, so it is desirable to have a clear idea of their respective spheres. In connection with the first the ideal of the most perfect style comes to mind; that it is the employment of the fewest terms musical or otherwise which will convey the meaning most completely under the conditions of presentment. Such an ideal of style of course appeals only to highly organized

minds. It is based on the far-off consciousness that life is short and there is a great deal to do in it, and that therefore the man who can express what he has to express as concisely and decisively as possible is a benefactor of his species. And there is yet another allurements about it, that it invites exercise of the mind in those that wish to understand, and gives a pleasant feeling of exhilaration to those who feel they have grasped a full meaning, with all its copious implied side allusions, and subtle hints at far distant coherences.

But this desirable aspect of style seems altogether countered by the decorative impulse. The decorative part of art is indeed necessarily on the surface and easily influenced by fashion and temporary whims. But it covers an enormous deal of ground in art, and might even be described by superficial observers as the ultimate object of it. Yet when the object is to convince it is for the most part obstructive. It keeps people waiting. But then on the other hand it may keep people waiting willingly. Where the object is to dwell upon something beautiful, touching, mysterious and moving, and not hurry on, as in an argument, the decorative element has an ample excuse.

Two types of mind come into consideration. The man who wants to reason out a thing to its conclusions and is not concerned with its beauty resents the decorative element which hampers its progress and often distracts him. The mind which is more susceptible to beauty wants to linger over it, and see the beauty enhanced by appropriate adornment. Both attitudes are perfectly legitimate, but the latter needs the most qualification.

There have been various types of composers who may be described as decorative, and some of the greatest of them were also great masters of conciseness of style when the occasion called for it. And it is to be observed also that some of the most intense and spiritual of all forms of art have been mainly based on decorative procedure, as that most enchanting form of art, the Choral Prelude, of which Buxtehude and J. S. Bach and a few latter-day German composers have produced such moving examples. But therein lies the cue to the thing which matters in decorative treatment, that it serves to enhance the meaning and the beauty of the matter in hand. In this connection a fact worth observing which seems to run counter to preconceived opinions is that J. S. Bach was most decorative when he had something peculiarly poignant, pathetic, humanly moving to express—as in both the final passages of the scene of Peter's denial in the St. John and the St. Matthew Passions, and in the Agnus Dei in the B minor Mass, the pathetic slow movement of the Italian

Concerto, the Prelude in E \flat minor in the first book of the *Wohltemperirtes Klavier*, in the most deeply felt of all the Chorale Preludes, "O Mensch beweine," in the great G minor Prelude for Organ, and countless specially sad passages in Recitatives and Ariosos. The spontaneous feeling of humanity would probably be that in times of sadness and sorrow the indulgence in decoration would be inappropriate. But this corrective in the spontaneous practice of one of the most just-minded of composers is enforced by a very wide range of fact. It is notorious that lamentations and songs of bewailing in folk music and savage music are full of decorative passages—sometimes they seem almost made up of them. And turning to more modern examples, the most pathetic and poetical of all Chopin's Etudes, that in C \sharp minor in Opus 25, is a perfect rhapsody of decoration. Instances might be multiplied *ad infinitum*. The suspicion grows that decorative procedures are more apt to times of mourning than ordinary times, and that, what is stranger still, men of sense are more apt to resent them as superfluous at ordinary times than at melancholy times. And this leads to the confirmation of what has been said above that decorative treatment is mainly appropriate when something has to be dwelt upon, and contemplated at length; and it follows that in such a case the type of decoration must be such as is consistent in style and expression with the central mood, for if it were not it would diminish the effect instead of enhancing it.

The German composers just before and about Bach's time developed a specially expressive type of decorative passages which are very characteristic of the race. Keiser affords some examples in his sacred music, and so does Handel in his earliest compositions; and Bach's examples, above alluded to, belong to the same expressive type, which thoroughly justifies itself. On the other hand there is the type which does not ultimately justify itself, in which the decoration is hardly more than passage-writing for the purpose of vocal display. The worst kind of such decoration is afforded in the horrible inanity of what is called "coloratura" in Italian operas from almost the earliest days till the first half of the nineteenth century. Such decorative adjuncts have generally no meaning at all, and were introduced for no other purpose than to show off the vocal vanity of the singers. Some of the worst and most aggressive are in Meyerbeer's operas. They were aggressive because people about his time were waking up to the futility of such decorations. In modern times the sense of appositeness has so developed that such a thing only occurs in quite irresponsible music; and as the vocal part of musical

dramas approximates more and more to musically defined elocution the decorative features become more and more rare.

But meanwhile decorative treatment has become inevitable for other reasons than the enhancement of ideas. It is one of the familiar paradoxes of life that it was rendered inevitable on grounds of style in harpsichord music and in pianoforte music, because of their extremely limited power of sustaining tone. The result of this absolute disability was the development of the principle of presenting the ideas and indeed most of the musical material in rapid passages which represented either the harmonies or the essential notes of melody in decorative terms. This branch of art went through the usual phases; beginning with conventional formulas of arpeggios, and gradually became more and more characteristic and appropriate as composers found out how to manipulate the passages. Beethoven by degrees evolved a splendid standard of such treatment, as for instance in the last movement of the Sonata in C minor, Opus 111. And thenceforward pianoforte composers applied themselves more and more to the fashioning of decorative passages which aptly express the sentiment or feeling of what is in hand. The greater part of Chopin's music is expressed in terms of decoration, of the very subtlest kind. No composer ever excelled him in this respect. Such familiar works as the first and last parts of the Impromptu in A flat, the same portions of the Fantasia Impromptu in C sharp minor and the Study in F minor in Opus 25 are entirely devoid of long notes of any kind; and such treatment of the instrument is an ideal solution of the problem of style, and at the same time produces a dazzling effect, because of the rapid flitting by of notes which are extraneous to the harmony.

Chopin emphasizes the point of the necessity of the decorative features being interesting and appropriate in themselves. The reason why the old kind of theme and variations was so generally detested was that the decorative features were purely perfunctory. They were put there merely for show, and added nothing of interest to their foundation or theme. Bach made his one great exception to the common run of such works in his Goldberg Variations; setting them aside, the progress of the understanding of decorative treatment is nowhere more vindicated than in the restoration of the variation form in favour in Beethoven, Brahms, Dvorak, Tschaikowsky and other recent composers; the meaning of it being that each variation becomes a new presentation of the theme, frequently on a distinct decorative scheme which has its individual character and its inevitable individual principles of

coherence. The point evidently is that the decorative element in art tends more and more to have its own unmistakable meaning. Where the sense of falseness comes in is where the decorative material is merely used for display; to show off the technical efficiency of the performer. Such kind of foolishness soon reveals its purpose. It has its inevitable success for a time and then all really musical people are glad to be rid of it. Musical people want to feel that the things to whose spell they submit themselves are intelligible; and intelligible in an honourable fashion. If they are only explicable as being put in for show, people who really want music see that the purpose is not a profitable one, and decline to give their attention further.

But there is yet another inevitable cause of decorative treatment, and that is to provide for texture in works which have to be played by many instruments. The reason why the violin style has developed into such flexibility and vivacity of decorative qualities is probably that it is essentially a melodic instrument, and in trying to represent harmony with it composers found themselves hampered by the obviousness of mere arpeggio formulas, and had to seek for ways of sophistication by the addition of inessential notes in order to induce sufficient definition and character. The same tendency is ultimately observable in all melodic instruments, that is to say in all the instruments constituting the modern orchestra; only they have progressed more slowly because they were not by nature so agile as the violin. The progress of orchestration was parallel to this development. At first, as every one knows, it was content with the basic essential notes, varied with conventional formulas; but as composers' technique and the technique of performers increased, every individual instrument established claims on the composer. He had to find the passages that were apt to them to play as well as effective to play—and so by degrees the texture of an orchestral score became more and more alive in every part; no longer consisting of holding notes for some instruments and active passages for others, but each according to its ability, and the composer's, presenting their share in the special decorative fashion which is intelligible in relation to the activities of the others. Decorative treatment in such a case is the result of the necessity for avoiding mere bald statement on the one hand, and meaningless conventions on the other. The impulse is inevitable, and the thing that matters is that it shall mean something.

But the significance of decorative treatment is quite different in choral and instrumental music. In the latter it proves to be

inevitable, but in a sense different from that in vocal music. Special solo voices become apt to decorative purposes through special training in that direction. By nature there is comparatively little need for the decorative element even in solo music, as may be observed in the tendencies of modern song; and, as has been observed before, in modern music drama. But choral music is even less apt for decorative purposes. Decoration is very nearly non-existent in the madrigals and church music of the purest Elizabethan type. Voices are not naturally agile enough to invite it. And consequently there follow some very decisive differences between instrumental and choral style which are not confined to mere decorative conditions.

In the earlier phases of art which were founded entirely on the conditions of choral music, voices being inapt for rapid passages, interest and vivacity of texture was provided by simple, melodious passages of counterpoint, which adequately exercised the voices. When instruments came to be used which were not bound by the limitations of music for voices, and could take and play any notes that were required of them, however acute the resulting discordance, and also easily perform passages of rapidity and character which would have been impossible for voices, composers had to project their minds into the attitude of thinking in instrumental terms instead of vocal terms. But habits and methods were too strong for them; and it is a strange fact that, though centuries have passed since music began to be performed mainly by instruments, men still cling to the idea, in theory, that what is suitable for voices is suitable for instruments, and continue to teach aspiring young composers to write instrumental compositions as if the limitations of vocal music still applied to them. As a matter of fact the whole basis of music was so deeply rooted in choral conceptions that it required a total change of attitude and even of reason of existence when instruments were employed instead of voices; and the latest instrumental art of the present day, which so completely bewilders and distresses the musicians who have been thoroughly saturated with the traditions of vocal art, is merely a frank negation of the necessity of applying the principles of choral music to instrumental music, and a determination to find the unalloyed principles of instrumental music.

In order to make this clear it is necessary to take a concise survey of one of the principal conceptions of a musical work which is intended to be performed by voices. Every musical work must start from a definite, intelligible point, and maintain a sense of necessary motion or impulse thenceforward from point to point

till the circuit, small or great, has been completed and return is made to the initial point again. It has to have something which pushes it on from moment to moment throughout. This was provided for in the most active sense by the introduction of discords, which may be called the energizing factors because they necessitate further motion in resolution. And the sense of inevitable motion can be maintained by the discord being resolved on some combination of sounds which is in unstable relation with the centre from which the composition set out; wherefrom the mind could realize that though the tension was relieved the relief was only relative and required further steps before the complete relief was afforded by its finding itself happily confronted by the centre from which it had set out.

But the process was mainly dependent on the physical difficulty of voices taking notes which were in discordant relation with other notes. This was the obvious basis of the rule, so characteristic of choral and vocal music, that discordant notes must be prepared. In the days when an infinite variety of discords had not become familiar experiences, voices could only sing discords by taking the notes which were to be discordant first as concordant notes and holding them while the other voices moved melodically and made them discordant. And this procedure induced the sense of necessary movement. The gradual abandonment, step by step, of the practice of preparing a discord came from the fact that instruments could take any note in relation to any other. Even in the days when choral music still predominated such mild discords as dominant sevenths were allowed to dispense with preparation; and some even less mild discords, such as ninths and derivatives of ninths and discords which were explained as *appoggiaturas* were by degrees excused this ancient formality. Preparations in such cases were dispensed with because singers could find the exact pitch of the notes with security. Their growing knowledge of a wider range of chords enabled them to dispense with preliminary.

But as people did not understand the real origin of the process of preparation, and also because it was a characteristic feature of the finest kind of art then known, they still maintained that every properly conducted composer should still prepare his discords, like a good little boy at school. It is like the exasperating and familiar argument that, if a thing has been good enough for a man's parents, it ought to be good enough for him. To the awakening mind the maintenance of such a theory as the preparation of discords seems like an illustration of the

persistence of a tradition which is not germane to the facts of the situation.

But there are much deeper things involved. The whole texture of the art of music was so permeated with and so dependent upon the methods of choral art that it needed complete transformation of its whole essence and principles. But they had in their turn to be found out. Just as after a revolution men revert to the forms and details of administration which were in existence before it for lack of schemes and principles more apt to a new constitution of things; so in the slow and peaceful revolution from choral music to instrumental music men went on thinking they must lay stress on the rules and customs of the earlier art, though as a matter of fact they were no longer apposite.

But a very potent consideration was also that art was permeated through and through by special kinds of dexterity and device, which were signs and tokens of a noble artistic scheme. One of the subtlest and most ineradicable of these was that the old choral counterpoint was all developed on the basis of what was enjoyable for a human creature to sing. The most delightful choral music is that which all the singers can rejoice in as they sing. That is such choral music as recognizes the humanity as well as the vocal limitations of the performers. The composers whose works were described as "Apt for Voices and Viols" had no notion whatever of what even viols could do. The scope of instruments was so infinitely wider than that of voices that what was enjoyable to the instrumentalist to play was necessarily a totally different thing from what would rouse the zeal of the singer. The instrumentalist would by no means be excited about playing vocal parts. They would seem tame to him because they did not make sufficient or even suitable calls upon his abilities. Yet composers who are still trained in the ancient love of choral music, still address themselves to thinking the instrumental parts of their scores on the same terms as if they were voices. They still try to make them humanly interesting from a vocal rather than a positively instrumental point of view. And it is a pathetic fact that the composers who do so are far finer characters, and their music is of deeper quality than that of those who have thrown all the time-honoured anomalies to the winds. The old practices are associated with thoughts to which men can bow their heads in pure sincerity, and it is difficult to keep such influences at bay when they have taken possession. Whereas the new methods are associated with the humours of the street, and the man who has lived the life contemplative, or indeed genuinely

intelligent, finds difficulty in turning somersaults and cartwheels in public with the merry urchins.

So it has come about that instrumental music continued to be saturated with the methods and appliances of choral music, till near the end of the nineteenth century. It was then, in the universal repudiation, which applied to painting art, sculpture, decorative art, and even social conditions, as well as music, in most countries which were at all progressive, that some composers really faced the facts. Their comprehensive abandonment of all the familiar standards of art at this time included the traditional cogency of such simple procedures as preparing and resolving discords. Composers realized that instruments could play any notes they were asked to play and that the very wildest of sensational discords were quite easy to them, and even the simultaneous performance of passages and progressions of chords in several different keys at once. So the ears of the experts were assailed, and the groundlings seemed to triumph. Undoubtedly the groundlings were delighted with the new sensations with which music could provide them, and not a few composers devoted what skill they had to the devising of the most excruciating combinations of notes. The moment was opportune, and even sensitive experts could find vast entertainment in such amusing experiences. They had no need to be distressed at the strange ebullitions, for the really musical expert can see through the apparently confused tangle. The groundlings and their flatterers have no doubt lost sight of the fact that all art is an adjustment of relations; and this the expert will deplore; but if he can see far enough he will remember that all progress entails some sacrifices, and that it is better to give up a few comforts than to relapse into lethargy and lifelessness. The mere claim of the abolition of laws must inevitably lead to unusual proceedings. Such proceedings are unlikely to have any reasonable or intelligent basis, and are always quite unsystematic at first. But they get sorted and systematized and put in their proper places as time goes on. The things that are merely wild and extravagant disappear, and the strokes that really have some meaning are assimilated into the body of art.

But a revolution always takes time to settle, and until the new paths are more clearly defined there must be at least two types of composers. There are those on the one hand who must be attracted by the old methods because they afford them so much scope and are associated in their minds with all that is noblest and purest in their art, which is still intelligible on the

old terms; while on the other hand there must be adventurers who love to show their daring and disdain of things they believe to be inapt and old-fashioned; and show such disdain principally in splashes and spasms, and revert elsewhere to the makeshifts of those who are utterly uninitiated in the mysteries of artistic method and meaning. The way out lies through the slow and difficult progress of developing consistency in style. Which is another way of describing intelligible relations. When examples of aggressively up-to-date procedure are presented in connection with archaic conventions which date from far remote periods of art the most unsophisticated hearer soon perceives there is something awry. The style is fatally inconsistent because the relations of parts to one another are unintelligible. The ultimate test of everything is merely whether it is intelligible or not.

Yet things may appear absurd for a time because of the limitations of those whose minds are not sufficiently trained to find the clue. An illustration may be afforded through the extraordinary revelation in recent times of possible relations between harmonies which appear to be almost at the extremes of remoteness in tonality. It must be pointed out that art illustrates the fact of its being a counterpart of the mind most significantly in always seeking to expand the range of its sense of relations; and successive generations of composers have aimed at such expansion because the more things can be made intelligible through their relations the greater the scope and the greater the interest both of expression and structure. In the Sonata period composers and audiences were quite satisfied with Tonic and Dominant chords and a few well-defined subordinates. They had not yet found out how to make a vast number of chromatic harmonies intelligible. J. S. Bach had found out some things worth knowing, but the Sonata composers were not concerned with him. And there are reasons which it would take too long to explain which gave him an advantage. But when Beethoven in his later years had indicated the path, composers soon began to find out how to make the use of a vast array of additional harmonies, and thereby enormously enhanced the interest as well as the range of immediate expression.

The process by which such things are made intelligible is by linking harmonies which appear remote from one another through progressions of other harmonies which have intelligible relations with both of them. As an instance may be taken the linking of such harmonies as those of F# and C, which to a musician of the Sonata period would seem almost unthinkable. But if a modern composer wants to get to the chord of C from the chord of F# he

finds it quite easy to go from F# to the chord of B minor; and then taking the root note B as a pivot note he can easily convert it into the third of G, the Dominant Chord of C, to which he might, if so minded, add the minor 7th of that chord in order decisively to obliterate the most essential note of the chord F#, and then proceed with assurance of being understood to C. Of course there are dozens of other ways in which it might be done which an astute composer would choose from motives of design or expression. The main point is that the connection between F# and C should be made intelligible. And by like processes every chromatic chord in the whole range is capable of being netted into the circumference of the tonality of C, or relatively any other central keynote. But a musician of the Sonata period whose understanding was limited to Tonic and Dominant and a few trifling accessories might be entirely bewildered by the appearance of such extraneous chords; more especially as every kind of artist and litterateur at times thinks it admissible (in a fit of conciseness) to drop out the obvious term, because he thinks it is no use explaining what everybody may be expected to know. Then the poor scion of limited Sonata experience would indeed be lost. If for instance a modern composer dropped the chord of B minor in the progression described above, and went straight from the chord of F# to the last inversion of the minor seventh on G, the man who had not experienced the full logical progression would feel as if the world of his art were whirling off into space.

The outcry which has so often greeted new departures in musical art is always the protest of those who do not understand. Sometimes they have been quite right. There is nothing to understand. Oftentimes they have been wrong; and not infrequently they have been half and half. The progression which is new might be intelligible but quite out of gear with its context. In other words it would in that case produce objectionable inconsistency in style. Inconsistency is incoherent. Incoherence is unintelligible. What is unintelligible is only fit for the rubbish heap.

In this connection there comes in one of the subtlest and most difficult of questions, which has been specially discussed in connection with architecture. When a man sees battlements on the walls of an ancient building which was liable to be besieged he knows what they were there for. But when he sees them on the top of a semi-suburban villa he does not think very highly of the architect or builder who put them there. The possible banker's clerk who lives in the semi-suburban villa would justify them on the grounds of association—that they suggested the sort of

buildings which roused his romantic or pugnacious instincts. The question becomes urgent. For even as in architecture every feature whatever was invented or devised to meet some special structural need or climatic condition, so in musical art every note of the scale and almost every chord and progression was found out by composers to supply some special purpose, to answer some need that they felt imperative. But to the man who comes to such things without any experience or knowledge of what each thing meant in the first instance, it seems as if everything was a blank, meaningless counter that he could put anywhere he liked so long as the effect was nice. The results often illustrate the difference between genuine knowledge and the lack of it; such as people often experience when they hear a totally illiterate person make a speech or a sermon with intention to impress the hearers by fine and lofty language.

But in real honesty it must be admitted that a thing which is invented for one purpose is not absolutely precluded from being used for another. The whole question again is whether the new use proves itself intelligible and whether the new use serves to better or to deteriorate the human beings that experience it; and whether the new use is in due proportion to the other features and factors. It becomes apparent that the motive or spirit in which any particular artistic procedure or action is taken affects the feeling of the intelligent auditor. Vulgarity is mainly a specially offensive form of stupidity which invites people to fall down and worship things which are obviously base, false, pretentious and empty. Most of the misapplications of architectural features, like the battlements on suburban villas, suggest that designation. But it is the pretentious impulse that decides it. If an innocent child put battlements to its garden shed the question of vulgarity might be shelved.

In the same category comes the colossal outpouring of popular music for the masses which entirely ignores the original purposes and meanings of things. It all belongs to the same order as the artistic furniture standardized and supplied wholesale by commercial houses, who not only pay journeymen to put the stuff together, but also manipulate the taste of the ignorant to make them eager for their wares, exactly as the dressmakers, tailors and hatters arrange the fashions. In such things there is no meaning, and no purpose. It is mere stringing together of letters that have no spirit, and never has any life at all. However, one must admit frankly that there are commercials of genius, and that when they combine with the fashion-makers to direct public attention to

certain special ingenuities and novelties of procedure very interesting and valuable results may be attained. But there is an inevitable stain on such work. It leaves an unclean taste in the mouth. Men who understand watch the products with pitiful interest. They can see in the actual work produced the inner life of the human types that produced and take pleasure in the result. When the man of genius prostitutes his gifts to ignoble uses, be he ever so slim, out of the number of people who will observe his work some have the instinct of sincerity. And yet some one may illustrate what has been said above about applying things that were invented for one purpose to a different and more profitable one! And art will thereby be a gainer.

The fact that counts is that art is always growing by so much vitality as the really productive artists can put into it. The really productive artist does not only contrive the expression of himself. He builds up more art. The increment is the proof of real life—we must admit that it sometimes happens that it is among things we feel inclined to reprobate that we find the factors of expansion. But the music of the inner life cannot discriminate before the event. It has to accept and discriminate afterwards—and the important thing is that people should by degrees approximate to being able to distinguish between what will serve for honourable ends and what merely appeals to the lower instincts. Art either refines and enlarges man's inner being or feeds the stupid animal in him. If it does the former it is to his advantage, if the latter it is not. The comforting fact, about which there is no mistake, is that in the long run it is the former kind of art which survives.